

NatureWorks USA

Troy, Montana

406-295-936

We are opposed to HB 161 and ask you to vote no on this bill.

Sandie Sharkey-Knox R.N.M.N. and David Knox C.R.A. and Applied Nutrition, have been natural healthcare providers for 22 years in Libby and Troy. We provide body balancing through proper nutrition, food supplementation, herbs, massage and medical cannabis. We added medical cannabis 2 years ago, as a part of what we do. 80% of the cannabis we produce is converted to ingestible and topical oils. 50% of the ingestible oils have no psychoactive effects. 100% of the topical oils have no psychoactive effects.

In addition to our healthcare practice we have also designed, funded and operated Afterschool Programs for Libby Public Schools, Drug and Alcohol Out Patient Treatment programs for Youth Court Services and Sheltercare/Group Home for Youth Court Services in Lincoln county. We are certified by the state of Montana as drug and alcohol prevention specialists.

Medical cannabis has provided relief to so many patients that it would be impossible to elaborate. We are certain you have heard many stories about the positive effects of medical cannabis. We became involved with medical cannabis not because we set out to sell "pot". A friend was battling stage IV breast cancer. She was going through her fourth round of Chemo. She had tried all the drugs available to reduce the nausea and to help her sleep but nothing was working. She was ready to give up. She asked us for help. We suggested a cannabis cookie. She tried it and within 30 minutes declared that she was going to have lunch and take a nap. Three months

later her cancer was in remission again. We were somewhat surprised by the results and were curious if cannabis would work for other patients, it was then that we decided to add medical cannabis to our practice. Our backgrounds give us a rather unique view of the medical cannabis industry.

We are asking that you vote against repeal for many reasons;

First, it was approved by Montana voters.

Second, thousands of patients are getting relief from medical cannabis that were unable to obtain relief using pharmaceuticals.

Third, thousands of businesses have been started to provide medical cannabis. Employment in the state is very important and whether this was intended to be a jobs bill or not, the consequence is that it has created and will continue to create much needed jobs.

Fourth, repeal will only drive cannabis underground again, making it much more difficult and costly to try to enforce. The majority of patients we talk to and deal with want to be legal.

Fifth, repeal will not stem the flow of drugs into the school system. Teens and pre-teens have always found a way to try and use drugs in our society. They are non-discriminatory as to the type of drugs they will use. We have found through our work with teens and their families that teens are opportunistic in that they will always use what is most easily obtainable. Currently pharmaceuticals are the easiest to obtain. Marijuana has always, in the last 30 years, been easily obtainable by teens. While drug use among teens and pre-teens is not and never will be acceptable, repealing the medical cannabis law will not stop nor stem the flow of drugs to this market.

Sixth, we are seeing market forces, as a result of legal medical cannabis, pushing black market providers out of business.

Seventh, we are seeing people that have never used marijuana or been associated with it in the past, move to use it to help them medically. When the law was first passed it was the stoners and

illegal growers that rushed into becoming legal. This was to be expected. As the industry has matured and the Obama administration has eased federal enforcement, law abiding citizens have replaced most of the former "dealers". Today patients demand better product and service from their caregivers. We are beginning to see caregivers that only wanted to sell "dope" close down operations because they have no idea how or desire to serve patients healthcare needs.

We have many ideas as to how the current medical cannabis law could be modified to make it workable for law enforcement, educational institutions, caregivers, patients and all others involved. Please contact us at any time if we can be of assistance.

Please vote no on HB 161.

Thank you for your service to Montana and its citizens.

Sincerely,

Sandie Sharkey-Knox R.N.M.N.

David T. Knox